

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY.

The Celebration to-day of the Birthday of the Father of his Country—How it will be Observed Throughout the Country and in the City—Parades, Processions, Public Speaking, Patriotic and Poetic.

George Washington was born on the 22d of February, 1732, and to-day is consequently the 124th anniversary of that event. Since his death, which occurred in the year 1799, his memory has been duly honored on the annual return of his birthday by those who appreciate his great public services, and who regard him not only as the foremost man of all his time, but also as the purest and best of the many of whom history gives us an account.

But, though the event of his birthday occurring never passes without recognition, yet it has not been until lately that any public demonstrations were made. This is due principally to the growth of a more distinctly American feeling in our midst, which sees upon an occasion like the present to manifest itself publicly.

The observance to-day has a political bearing also, which accounts in some measure for the extravagant patriotism displayed by the politicians, who are always keenly alive to opportunities whereby they may make a little Bonaparte.

It must be confessed that though our people are as patriotic as any other under the sun, and though they do honor and respect the name of Washington, as "first in peace, first in war and first in the hearts of his countrymen," yet heretofore there has not been so much spirit manifested in the celebration of his birthday as in the people of other countries display on the anniversary of the birth of their heroes and statesmen, even in this country.

The annual commemoration of the memory of Burns and the return of St. Patrick's day has often called forth more real enthusiasm in New York than the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims or the annual return of Washington's birthday.

It is eminently just and proper to appropriately honor the memory of a great public benefactor. It argues a lack of patriotism, of public spirit, of common gratitude to a people, who are confessedly indebted to their great men for benefits conferred, not to make some public acknowledgment of the fact.

It is not only in civilized nations that such celebrations are known, as if only a civilized community that can appreciate properly brilliant deeds, pure intention, and great mental abilities and powers. In the case of Washington it is eminently appropriate to celebrate his birthday, for surely no nation was ever so indebted to a benefactor as is ours to him.

Had he not wished, America might have been a kingdom or an oligarchy, and he possessed of kingly power; but he rose superior to the weaknesses that beset not only monarchs but great minds, and preferred that his country should be free rather than himself grasp at any personal honor or dignity that could be conferred upon him by accepting regal authority.

Other great men have had such status upon their character that their most brilliant deeds will not serve to obliterate them from the minds of men; but all history, contemporaneous and posthumous, is unanimous in acknowledging that Washington's character and life were above and beyond reproach or suspicion. There have been generals whose list of military triumphs exceeded his in mere number, yet none were more skillful than he in adapting means to ends, and doing much with little.

As a statesman, he was not a great projector of public measures, for to Jefferson and Hamilton is due the glory of originating nearly all the institutions we boast of as peculiarly American; yet he was the pilot who steered the ship of State amid the perils and storms that encompassed it when first launched, though he did but little to make the keel and build the hull.

His great, pure, and unselfish character, and the honors paid to his memory show that while mankind admire brilliant and ambitious men, they respect and reverence good and wise ones. Self-abnegation is the surest proof of human virtues, and those who manifest it in the greatest degree merit and receive the highest honors known among men.

To-day will be a busy one over the country. At Philadelphia the Know Nothing National Convention will assemble, if not otherwise ordered, and the nigger worshippers will convene at Pittsburg, and both will immediately proceed to Presidential platform making.

At Cincinnati there is to be a great celebration of the day. The military, trades, and benevolent and recreative associations have all signified their intention of turning out in honor of the occasion. The Cincinnati newspapers are filled with notices of preparation.

In Boston, the young members of the Mercantile Association, with a due spirit of patriotism, and a proper regard to the memory of the chief instrument of the establishment of their country's independence, have resolved to celebrate the anniversary of the birthday of George Washington, this year, with such significance as belongs to the event. They have secured the assistance of Hon. Edward Everett, who has consented to meet them upon this occasion, and who will probably deliver there the last public speech which will ever be favored from his eloquent lips.

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